UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
COMMONWEALTH HONORS COLLEGE (CHC) COUNCIL

The charge of the Commonwealth Honors College Council is to provide advice to the Dean on all matters relating to the administration of the Honors College, its curriculum and policy, including;

- honors course approvals;
- standards governing the establishment, modification and termination of all Departmental Honors and Multidisciplinary Honors programs;
- standards governing CHC student admission and graduation; and
- standards governing and the direction of Honors theses/projects and independent studies.

Minutes

Date **October 16, 2023 12:20–2:00 PM**

Location **via Zoom** https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/93551699900?pwd=VzN4a0dVMU5Sd1p4ZUdrbWp0QllKZz09
Meeting ID: 935 5169 9900 **Passcode:** 955920

Attendance Benjamin Marlin, Camille Cammack, Dominick Usher, Elena Carbone, Jack Minella, Jean MacKimmie, Kim Tremblay, Mari Castaneda, Melanie Radik, Michael Krezmien, Muzzo Uysal, Neal Anderson, Stacy Giufre, Susan Ware, Theresa Dooley, Casey Krone (minutes)

Approve Minutes Minutes of 9/18/2023 are approved unanimously.

Announcements

Updates from the Dean (*Mari Castañeda)*

1. Family Weekend was October 13-15, 2023, CHC simultaneously hosted a Fall Talent Showcase at CHCRC with great participation.
2. Fall recruitment is currently happening.
3. 2023 CHC Plenary Lecture is tonight, October 16, 2023, 5pm Student Union Ballroom. HONORS 201H students are required to attend. This year's lecture is Envisioning Black Liberation: W.E.B. Du Bois's Transformative Ideas of Producer-Consumer Cooperation, given by Tracy Parker from the University of California Davis. https://www.umass.edu/honors/news/2023-plenary-lecture
4. If you are not receiving the weekly CHC newsletter, please let us know and we will add you to the distribution list. We are happy to include your relevant items in the newsletter.

New Business

1. Honors Course Review (*Mari Castañeda*)
    a) The attached Honors Course Approvals and Reapprovals are approved with one abstention.
    b) Members of the Council expressed concern with the potential risk to students registering for high credit load, single semester thesis seminars in their last semester if the situation arises that the student is unable to complete the thesis seminar and how this would impact their ability to complete the 120 credits needed for graduation.
    c) The Council discussed CHC's position on whether or not the honors thesis should be allowed to replace major requirements, particularly major requirements for capstone or culminating projects, i.e. the SPP capstone project which could be satisfied via SPP 499C & 499D which was just approved. Some council members thought that CHC's position was that the honors thesis should not be allowed to satisfy departmental or major requirements, however Dean Castañeda clarified that this is not CHC's current position. Chair Marlin recommended a follow-up action to reach out to colleges including

Engineering that require honors students to complete a separate capstone-like project in addition to the honors thesis to see if they are aware that these requirements could potentially be integrated if they were interested in providing that option for their students.

2. The Council voted to recommend to CHC to conduct an informal review at the two year mark for the two 7+ credit thesis seminars (HONORS 499DX - Colonialism and Empire and HONORS 499DY - A Sacred Earth: Ancient Thought, Indigenous Wisdom, and the New Animism). Results of the review are to be shared with the Council.
3. Proposed Honors Curriculum change *(Mari Castañeda/Dominick Usher)*
    a. The Council discussed the attached proposed honors curriculum change, including concerns about whether the proposed change would reduce the robustness of the CHC curriculum, the makeup of incoming honors students in terms of the credits they bring with them from high school, the potential impact on transfer students, how CHC requirements compare to honors requirements on other Commonwealth campuses, and recognition appearing on the transcript and diploma.
    b. A vote on the proposed curriculum change will occur at the November 20, 2023 Council meeting.

Any Other Business

- Tabled until next meeting

Committee Reports

- Tabled until next meeting

Reports from CHC Council Representatives on other Councils

1. Academic Standards Committee Review *(Elena Carbone)*
2. Academic Matters Council *(Dominick Usher)*
3. Research Council *(Thomas Brashear-Alejandro)*

Next Meeting

November 20, 2023, 12:20-2:00 pm

Attachments

- Honors Course Review materials
- Proposed Honors Curriculum change rationale
- Minutes from 9/18/2023 meeting